

ITEM: 20

SUBJECT: Walker Mine Acid Mine Drainage Abatement Project,
Plumas County

BOARD ACTION: Authorize the Executive Officer to apply for State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account funds and enter in to contracts for maintenance and cleanup activities for the Walker Mine.

BACKGROUND: The Walker Mine is an inactive underground copper mine in Plumas County about 20 miles east of Quincy. The mine property is abandoned with no legal owner. In 1987, this Board placed a concrete seal in the Walker Mine to prevent acid mine drainage from discharging and polluting a 10 mile stretch of Little Grizzly Creek in Plumas County. The seal has worked well and fish and other aquatic organisms have returned to Little Grizzly Creek.

Access to the seal must be maintained and the performance of the seal monitored for effectiveness, leakage, hydrostatic pressure and safety, because the seal holds back an estimated 213 million gallons of acid mine drainage water @ 210 feet of head above the seal.

The seal was installed 2,675 feet in from the mine portal in the main 700 level adit of the Walker Mine. The adit from the portal to the seal consists of 225 feet of corrugated metal pipe, 900 feet of heavy ground supported by mining timbers, and 1,550 feet of competent ground that needed no support.

Repair of the adit ventilation system is needed for staff to safely inspect the adit for operability and the seal for leakage. Long term maintenance work over the next five years includes, timber replacement, ground support measures to ensure that the adit remains operable for access and integrity testing of the mine seal, and monitoring of the acid mine water contained behind the seal.

Additionally, other major work needs to be performed to improve water quality. This includes, removal or containment of several hundred thousand cubic yards of mine waste material immediately down gradient of the Walker Mine portal, removal or containment of numerous mine waste piles at various locations on the 800-acre abandoned mine property, and securing numerous shafts and subsidence areas associated with past mining activities.

The State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA) contain funds earmarked for operations, maintenance, and cleanup activities at the Walker Mine. However, this Board's resolution (97-160) authorizing the Executive Officer to apply to the CAA for funds to respond to problems associated with the Walker Mine expired in 2007.

This agenda item includes a Resolution which would authorize the Executive Officer to enter in to engineering services and construction contracts for maintenance activities and cleanup actions for the next five years estimated at \$120,000 per year from the State Water Resources Control Board for activities associated with the Walker Mine.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to apply to the State Water Resources Control Board from the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account and authorize the Executive Officer to enter in to engineering services and construction contracts for maintenance activities and cleanup actions associated with the Walker Mine.

Mgmt. Review_____

Legal Review_____

18 March 2010
11020 Sun Center Dr. #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670